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The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Letter dated 12 August 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, I have the honour to convey herewith information on the harsh and inhuman treatment by Israel of the students of the occupied Syrian Golan upon their return to join their families during the summer holiday (see annex).

It would be greatly appreciated if this letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 36 and 78 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mikhail **Wehbe**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/57/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 12 August 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

It has been customary in past years for students from the occupied Syrian Golan studying at the University of Damascus to return to spend the summer vacation with their families by way of the Quneitra crossing point. The first party of such students left on 26 June 2002, the second on 1 July 2002 and the third on 4 July 2002. We informed students from the occupied territory of the severe ill-treatment suffered by their colleagues in terms of abuse, searches and interrogation at the crossing point, together with beatings and physical violence.

One student in the first party, Ashraf Farhat (second year of medical studies) was beaten and interrogated, his clothes, photographs and personal possessions were burnt and he was detained for five hours.

In the second party, which left on 1 July 2002, a student named Atta Najib Farhat, Chairman of the Committee of Students from the Occupied Syrian Golan at Damascus University, was beaten and abused, his clothes and personal possessions were burnt and he was then arrested on suspicion of "consorting with the enemy". This student is still under arrest and in very poor condition. His family have been categorically forbidden to see him and his lawyer has not been allowed to meet him. At the present time we have no information on Israel's treatment of the students in the third party.

This inhumane and barbarous treatment of students from the occupied Syrian Golan by the Israeli occupying forces is contrary to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War which has been declared by resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981), adopted on 17 December 1981, as well as all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the most recent of which was resolution 56/63, adopted on 10 December 2001, to be applicable to the Syrian Golan.

The Syrian Arab Republic appeals to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention and to all States and organizations that uphold international humanitarian law and human rights to intervene to stop violations by Israel of the most elementary principles of international law and to secure the release of the Syrian Arab detainees in the occupied Syrian Golan, including the student Atta Najib Farhat.